

## Transcription: Doroteo Quinones

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*Today is Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013. My name is James Crabtree and this morning I'll be interviewing Mr. Doroteo Quinones. This interview is being conducted in support of the Texas Veterans Land Board Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. I'm at the General Land Office Building in Austin, Texas, and Mr. Quinones is at his home in San Antonio, Texas. Sir, thank you very much for taking the time to do an interview with us. It's an honor for us. Sir, the first question I always start off with is please tell us a little bit about your childhood and your life before you went into the military.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Well, I was working with this company, KSP, and it's not there no more, but I worked for that people, for those people about 36 years.

*Were you living in San Antonio when the war started?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yes sirree, I was. In fact, me and a friend were in, excuse me for saying it, but it was the truth so help me God, we were in a beer joint, and a bunch of guys there, they say first time we're being attacked by Japanese. And my friend says I'm going home. Me, too. So I came home to my family and I told them what has happened, and that's all we can do, keep on working until I tell you what, I volunteered to go in the service in the kind that I had to teach already at that time, and I don't want them to be other, so that's the reason I talked to my wife, look, I got to go. That's all there is to it. I had just called her my mija. I call my wife mija. Anyway, I says I got to go, that's it, period. So I took off. I went into the service 1943 I think it was.

*Yes sir.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** And I went to \_\_\_\_, well, I stay here for quite a while in the States taking my bike to train and then I think I was sick for about six, a bunch of months I tell you, from it was sometimes I don't remember, but it happened here that I caught the yellow fever, or what do you call 'em, yellow jaundice, I worked here in the States.

*Where did you go to boot camp?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Camp Hood, it was Camp Hood at that time.

*Where is that located?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** On the other side of Austin. Yeah, it's about 100 miles from here more or less.

*OK. How did you come about to be in the Army? Did you choose to go into the Army, or did they tell you that was the branch you were going into?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** No, it was all right all the way. They took me overseas, so it's not easy.

*My question sir is how did you end up in the Army? Did you choose to go into the Army instead of the Navy or the Marine Corps, or did they just tell you hey, you're going into the Army?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** No, they just told me I was in the Army after we swear in, that you are in the Army now. They call us to get together and tell us that we are in the service after we swear. You are all in the service now. All right.

*When you went to boot camp, then after that did they make you a rifle man? Was that your specialty?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** No, I started it back in training. They give us all those exercises and marching and how to use the M-1, and other grenade, and all of that. They teach or show us how everything like that work, so they said you don't have no troubles when you get over there. I was well trained. In my book, I was well trained, I tell you the truth.

*What do you remember about your drill instructors, your drill sergeants?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Well, it wasn't easy, I tell you, it wasn't easy. \_\_\_\_ to come from anywhere sudden, and like you said don't really went into action, but we paid those guys pretty bad.

*You think your drill sergeants did a pretty good job then training you for what you would face later on in combat?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, that's what they said, we're gonna train you. And excuse me, the way they had told us, you know, we're gonna train you and show you how to kill or be killed, either one. And they give us on that, you know, some guys take away, I mean take out, they say those kind of guys, they ain't got it. Anyway, they took it, they went in the service. And I tell you, it was not easy, especially at night. It was over there in the Philippines.

*Did any of your friends go to boot camp with you? Did you know anybody when you went to basic training?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Well, I'll tell you, no I didn't see none, I think they all, those fellows pass away except one that I saw here about three years ago. I don't know what, she's living or not, but most of my friends, I used to go \_\_\_\_, I say I'm not gonna make a friend, not no more. There are not even guys that we were raised together, went to school together, they are all gone except me, I'm still over here.

*When you went to boot camp, did any of your friends go to boot camp with you?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, a bunch of friends here from San Antonio, we were together, and we went through basic and it was \_\_\_\_, but they said they gotta do it. I told the story, you either die or fight, whatever. So when you are over there, it's not easy.

*How did your family feel about you being in the Army? Were they supportive?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** My mama didn't feel real good, my wife neither. But I told them that's all there is to it, that I got to go, that's it, period. I went in and volunteered myself. A lot of guys make fun of me when I tell them I volunteered myself. Did you volunteer? Yes I did. And they are still making fun out of me. Well -

*No, that's a very honorable thing that you did.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** I certainly did, and I'm proud of it, and still proud. Uncle Sam the way he treat me, I didn't have nothing to say about it except that Uncle Sam is not with us when we are over there. He's out of our sight when we get to go close to combat. It's not easy.

*I'm sure your family was worried for you, but I'm sure they were also very proud, too, right?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** They certainly are. The family all are proud. My kids and I got one here he's living with me, he is really proud and he showed my discharge to some of his friends, and they say oh, your father was over there. Yes sirree, I was.

*That's great. Tell us sir, after you got out of boot camp, where did you go to next?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** I think we stayed there, and then they took us \_\_\_\_\_. We were gonna go to Europe but that day changed and they got us back \_\_\_\_\_ from POE New York, and POE in the South Pacific, so we don't know which way we're gonna go. At the last minute, they told us you're going to South Pacific. It took us about two months to then decide where we was going, and at last they say we are going to South Pacific.

*Where did they put you on a ship? Do you remember when you got aboard the ship?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** The ship?

*What ship, do you remember where you sailed from to get to the South Pacific?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Well the worst, I tell you the worst going, on going over there, it's two guys, two guys walk about 40 yards or less, you got to meet, go forward and walk about 40 feet away from your partner, and come again, same. We had all that.

*Where did they ship you out of to sail to the Pacific? Did you sail out of San Francisco?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, I think they did, they shipped out of San Francisco. It was about 3 o'clock when we got on the boat, and then we stayed there, and we took off, I don't know, anyway it was about 6 o'clock. The \_\_\_\_ of the boat says "hear this" and we were already at the Golden Gate, and they says "you guys overseas, you are overseas now." And my gosh, it took us 6 weeks to get to Philippines, maybe even a little more.

*A long time.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** And I tell you, they took me by boat, and they bring me home by boat, that's what I didn't like, coming back, because already they had those planes they were taking, no it was later on. When my kids went over there, they take him overseas by airplane.

*Yeah, back in World War II it was by the ships.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** I was in World War II.

*What was it like being aboard the transport ships, because I understand they were pretty crowded?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** No sir, we were a bunch of guys, but I tell you what, I was sick \_\_\_\_ about a month. I couldn't eat. I couldn't do nothing, I was throwing out all the time.

*Were you seasick?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, not only that, and then I was one week in what they call the infirmary. I was that sick. The doctor told me you're throwing from your liver, and that's not easy. Anyway, they got me back in shape and we keep on going. But I got sick \_\_\_\_ when going on that boat.

*Where was the first place you got off of the ship? Was it in the Philippines?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** No, we hit some island, one island that I remember Onoway Island. We stopped there, just going by, we stopped there, we stayed there about 24 hours I believe. And we got over there and they give us our orders and beer, I quit beer. When I was in the service, I didn't drink nothing asking but for the water. Anyway we keep on going, and I don't remember, we stopped at two other islands, but I don't remember which islands they were. In fact on the second island, I saw a friend of mine here from San Antonio, and he says hey, what are you doing here? Why not me, they bring me over here?

*Tell 'em you were doing the same thing there he was.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, but he says we're resting. We were in the Philippines but we were resting. We're going over there to see what's going, it's not easy. All right, we took off again and I tell you it was about six to eight weeks before we hit the Philippines.

*What are your memories, sir, of the Philippines?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Well, we got there and we came to this camp, I don't know, I don't remember the name of the camp we stayed at. That's when the first gunnery came out and picked out some guys, and I was with a bunch. They transferred us to 4<sup>th</sup> Calvary divisions, and they give us 8<sup>th</sup> Engineer Squadron on that division.

*When you got to the Philippines, was there still a lot of fighting going on there?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Well not exactly, but those Japs come around at night especially, boom-boom-boom, and we got to going, facing them, but they still, you know Filipinos, because sometimes those goddam Japs come in the morning when you know it's kind of 6 o'clock, it's still dark. They come in in a sharp line. But the Pilipinos, they right away they go Jap, they did it.

*So even once you got there, there were still issues then with the Japanese trying to come into your camp at night time or -*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Not exactly that way, but I'll tell you what happened, they took us out on the field to make a road from the camp all the way to the ocean. They got a secret road and we was working on it when, no I'll tell you before that I was writing a letter to home at the mess hall when they dropped that bomb at Iwo Jimo, and those guys were hollering like hell and jumping and what have you, and this guy starts coming, hey, hey, these bombs they drop over there, it's about an inch so that can dig a hole in the ground that you can throw in there a two-story house,

and you don't know how a guy feels, or soldier feels, when they told him that, when they told us that. Well anyway, we stayed there for another while and then we was working that road, and a sudden, the war is over. Another guy got killed, you know, a guy was really happy and like I say what they call when a guy, he's got a name when a guy go out shooting here and there. We're just taking a lot of guys I tell you when they find out, they told us that the war was over. But anyway we keep on digging that road, and then everything when \_\_\_\_\_ and MacArthur were signing peace, we were on our way to Japan.

*OK.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** And I think the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, I'm not sure that was the 1<sup>st</sup> Division that was hit, these how can I put it, embarkations, one of the biggest in the Philippines, it was on Tokyo. That's where we were.

*So you were sent then to occupy Japan after they finally surrendered, right?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah.

*What do you remember about going to Japan?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Well, when we hit, a day after we hit the ocean, my guys, a big storm caught us going. Anyway we make it, and I tell you, like I say, I think the 1<sup>st</sup> Gunnery Division was the first to set foot on Japanese soil. So we got over there, it was about, I don't remember anyway we got over in the boats about 10 o'clock we were on the trucks, ready to go down, I think at Tokyo. We went down to those streets there and there's no people, no people on the street, nothing. I remember like when I saw a cowboy movie, the cowboy comes into town and he didn't see nothing, well that's the way. We look up on the buildings, and they are looking, but they dash when they saw us look up. But there was no people I tell you on the street. So it was like I say, seems to me there was no people over there. But after that, then the people start \_\_\_\_\_ with us and that's all. They were all right. They never, only say that some people said, some Japanese said, I don't know why our people are attacking you people. Well I don't know, but they were wrong all the way. I tell you, after what I saw in the Army, there will never be another army like the United States Army, I tell it. I can tell you that much.

*How long did you end up spending in Japan?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** I think I was there about eight to nine months I think.

*A pretty good period of time then.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, they are pretty good people, but I didn't use to go out, not too much. I was afraid and we can't do, we're here alive, let's just keep it that way. It was me.

*What did your unit do during most of that time? Did you do a lot of patrols or practicing? What was a typical day like in Japan during the occupation?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Well, it's really I cannot explain that, but anyway, it's still the same like here and everywhere else. Day time and night time. Well, we used to go out and take us out to see this, here and there, and people were all right. They didn't say we hate you people or not. They might have, but they didn't tell us they were sorry or that we were a good people, and they

told their people before it, said when the American soldiers come over here, they're gonna rape women, they're gonna kill and do all that. That's what they used to tell us, and I tell you we're not kind of people. We kill the people who give us that kind, if we have to do that, we'll do it.

*I'm sure then the Japanese people were afraid when you first arrived, and then over time they realized that -*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Like I say, they were afraid I think. Like I say, there's no people in the street, and my God, we passed by that part of Tokyo, and my God she was no people. A lot of people, there's a lot of different people over there. The streets were real crowded in the day time, and especially on that where we got to go to Tokyo or some other little town there, \_\_\_were really full of Japanese and American soldiers. So we have nice time after that, but everything was over and that's it, period.

*What were the men like that you served with? Can you tell us about the other soldiers in your unit, kind of like what they were like, where they were from, that sort of thing? Were most of them a bunch of young guys like yourself from all over the country?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, they were just really real nice. I didn't have nothing to say about Japanese people, but I tell you, I hate 'em for the first 20 years, I didn't like that people. And you know, it came to me after these other generations are coming up, I said this current generation ain't got nothing to do with the old generation if I was, but I tell you, then I just had to admit the Japanese people are going to be nice to us and be like they got a lot from, like Henry Ford, what they call it, they're building cars over here and doing a lot of things, the Japanese. Well, so this is another generation, and I had to follow my hands and say well, they're coming up on the right side, so we treat 'em the way we should. But I tell you, for the last 20 years, after the war, I didn't like Japanese, the worst opinion. I don't like Japanese too much, you know how I tell you. I hated because I tell you one thing that I can tell you, I did know how far I was from my family, from my loved ones, I didn't think about this when I was over there. But I know that I was way on the other side of the world and you know, I stopped and think I didn't die because I had a lot of guts, American, I'm a full-blooded Mexican, and that's what it is. The Uncle Sam treat me like I don't know what, and now he sharpened me a little bit, but they already declared me 100 percent disability. I've been trying to look for somebody to fix my leg. I'm 95 years old. And my legs were giving up. I used to do a lot of things around the house and now I just can't. I've been trying to look because we were full brothers when we were in the service. I talked to my brother next to me, I says, he is the same. His legs are giving up. And he says you know what goes on when the people are looking. It might be soon, but it's nowhere they can do something with our legs, but I'm going to keep doing it. He said it, too. But I tell you we'll find, I don't know, I don't know. But I'm still here, I got a lot of life.

*You sound like you're doing great, sir.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, I am, now that Uncle Sam is helping me, that's good. It took me from 1950 I had to fight it for my right to get something from the government. And I didn't, so I quit. And 50 years until, and then about 10 years ago that I start again working, I was trying to work something with the government because I'm a veteran, and yeah, Uncle Sam is helping me a lot now. I tell you it's true.

*Good, you've earned it for your service so that's only right that they do that. That's good.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** You know now, I go out in the streets, I got a cap that says a World War veteran, and then people salute me. You know I feel so proud of that people, and other times when the first World War was over, they didn't believe on the guys that went in the service. Now they do respect whoever was in any war that comes out, they respect the veterans real nice, and they're taking care of the veterans real nice. And I mean I got to think where they are choosing the way, in a way on the other hand it's a lot of veterans that they haven't been helped by the government, but that's because they don't keep at it.

*Well I think it's gotten a lot better than it used to be. I think veterans are treated a lot better at the wrong time and hopefully the VA and others are doing a better job now than they used to in the past.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, and these other guys from the first World War II, we were together and they say I'm not veteran, we make fun out of he's a veteran, he's a veteran, and anyway \_\_\_\_, we just make fun. Now I didn't know that I was going to be helping Uncle Sam get all these things going in the right place. So we did it and we are here, I tell you, better this \_\_\_\_, we are nice people. After that I can't tell you because United States is one of the most profitable nations there is in this world, I tell you the truth.

*Absolutely, sir, let me ask you, too, what was it like when you were finally able to come back home from the war? Do you remember coming back home and being reunited with your family again?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yes, I think we get together and come out right and good, I think the way it should and so on.

*Do you remember the day that you came back home? Whether you rode a train or a bus, or what it was like when they saw you again after some years?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** You mean when I come back?

*Yes sir, do you remember that day?*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, I tell you, we got to this place over there, shuttle, we got there one evening, Sunday evening, and I tell you, one of my sisters was still married had a son, and I was way over there. I called them and they said \_\_\_\_ got a wedding, your sister is getting married. Well, I'm not there, but I will be there in a few more days. Everybody you know came and visited me and my mama especially, my dad, and my brother, my sisters. So here I am, thank God.

*Yes sir.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** And thanks what else, the whole United States. There's no other United States to me. My parents are from Mexico but I was born here. I was born in Houston, 1918.

*Wow.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, and I was raised here, a little town down south about 20 miles from here, by Somerset, Texas. I was there from 1923 that I \_\_\_\_ and the sink, I brought us to San

Antonio. That was 6 years, 7 years old when I got to north San Antonio. Then it's beautiful, but San Antonio is becoming I don't know what, big town, big city.

*Yeah, it's very big, it's growing a lot.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** And I'm proud of it, too, because I was raised here, all my brothers and sisters went to school, and I think whoever it is, for the government especially that he do a lot of things and one of my presidents I will never forget him, that's President Roosevelt. He did a lot of things for us and that's it, I guess.

*Well sir, I'm really glad that we were able to interview you today and I appreciate especially the fact that your granddaughter is the one that contacted us that we should interview you, so we're thankful that she did that.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Yeah, well she is the one who's been doing a lot for me, and she's the one who's been going here and there until it came these certain people, that they say your grandfather is going to be 100 percent disability and he's gonna get some from the government, and it's gonna be living better. Well I thank to my granddaughter, and I hope, I saw some papers about two weeks ago, no a week ago, there was two soldiers in the Army in the first World War, and they caught a guy and a white guy, 107 years old. I saw that in the paper about two weeks ago.

*Yeah, there's a gentleman here from Austin who is 107, a World War II veteran, the oldest living veteran in the United States now, so that's probably the story you saw, Mr. Overton is his name.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Well I hope they are all being taken care of as well as me.

*Yes sir.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** And I don't know what else to tell you, or if you ask me anymore. But I tell you the truth. I thank my good old God and the praise of my mother and my wife. That's one thing I believe it.

*Absolutely.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** I'm a Catholic. I might not be a good Catholic, but I'm a Catholic, I tell you the truth.

*That's great. Well sir, I don't know if your granddaughter told you, but we're gonna make copies of this interview and we're going to save a copy here in the archives at the Land Office so that future generations can listen to these interviews and perhaps learn something from them. But we're also going to send you copies of this interview on CD so that you can give one to your granddaughter or whomever else you want to give them to, and we're going to send you a nice commemorative binder that has a letter and certificate signed by Commissioner Patterson, and it's really just a small token from the state of Texas as appreciation for your service to our nation.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** All right.

*We'll put that in the mail to you sometime after the new year and hope that you like it. It's our small way of saying thank you for your service.*



**Doroteo Quinones:** OK, and good night, God bless you.

*Yes sir, take care and have a Merry Christmas as well.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** I will.

*Yes sir, take care, bye.*

**Doroteo Quinones:** Bye.

*[End of recording]*